THE DEPARTMENT OF TRUTH

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1st ONE-SHOT 2020

TYNION >>> SIMMONDS >>> BIDIKAR

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KEEP GOING, COLE. TELL US WHAT HAPPENED NEXT.

REC

I DON'T KNOW.

REC

YOU SAID YOU WERE IN THE BASEMENT WITH MR. AND MRS. HARKEY.

REC

YES.

AND THERE WAS ANOTHER MAN.

REC

HE WAS... WEARING A CAPE. A DRACULA CAPE.

REC

DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT ELSE HE LOOKED LIKE?

N-NO.

DID HE HAVE ANY SPECIAL **MARKINGS**? ANYTHING THAT WOULD HELP US RECOGNIZE HIM?

A **STAR.**

A STAR ON HIS FACE. AND A DRACULA CAPE.

THANK YOU, COLE. YOU'RE DOING GREAT.

NO.

ARE YOU TIRED? WOULD YOU LIKE TO TAKE A BREAK?

REC

THE STAR-FACED MAN, HE SAID...

REC

IT'S OKAY, COLE. NONE OF THIS IS REAL.

THIS BABY ISN'T REAL. YOU CAN'T TASTE ITS MEAT. YOU CAN'T SMELL ITS BLOOD.

THIS IS ALL A DREAM LIKE YOUR MAMMA SAYS. LIKE YOUR TEACHER SAYS.

I'M A DREAM MAN, AND YOUR TEACHER LET ME IN.

AND I'M HUNNNNNGRY.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY. NONE OF THIS COUNTS.

IT'S NOT REAL SO IT DOESN'T COUNT.

YOU JUST CAN'T WAKE UP UNTIL I SAY SO.

OR HEEEEE'LL FIND YOU, AND GOOOOOOBBBLE YOU UP.

HE SAID NOT TO TALK.

IT'S OKAY, COLE, YOU CAN TALK TO ME.

REC

HE SAID NO. HE SAID THE **DEVIL KNOWS.** HE SAID HE'D FIND ME.

I WANT TO WAKE UP. I WANT TO WAKE UP.

REC

I WANT TO WAKE UP!

REC

-SIGH- OKAY. STOP THE TAPE.

REC

CHAOS

DEVILS REAL AND IMAGINED

YOU DIDN'T SLEEP.

I SLEPT.

YOU WERE STARING AT THE CEILING AT 5 A.M.

IT SOUNDS LIKE **YOU** DIDN'T SLEEP.

I NEVER SLEEP. I AM TERRIBLE AT SLEEPING. YOU NORMALLY SLEEP LIKE A ROCK.

I SLEPT FINE, MATTY.

OKAY.

DON'T DO THAT.

DO WHAT?

SAY OKAY LIKE THAT. LIKE IT'S GOING TO BE A FIGHT LATER.

I THINK I AM BEING VERY REASONABLE GIVEN THE FACT THAT MY HUSBAND DISAPPEARED FOR A FEW DAYS LAST WEEK AND WON'T TELL ME WHY.

OKAY.

YOU'VE LEARNED MY EVIL TRICKS.

MATTY...

WHAT'S UP?

LET'S SAY YOU COULD FIND OUT THAT ONE BIG CONSPIRACY THEORY WAS TRUE. LIKE YOU COULD PICK AND MAKE IT REAL AND FIND OUT ALL THE SECRETS BEHIND IT.

WHAT CRAZY CONSPIRACY THEORY DO YOU WANT ALL THE ANSWERS TO?

HMMM. I VOTE REPTILIANS.

REPTILIANS.

THE SHAPE-SHIFTING LIZARD ILLUMINATI THAT RULE OUR WORLD. THERE ARE VIDEOS ON YOUTUBE THAT SHOW DICK CHENEY BLINKING SIDEWAYS WITH VERTICAL EYE SLITS.

YOU KNOW? LIKE THE GUY AT THE START OF *MEN IN BLACK*?

WAIT. I SHOULD HAVE SAID THE MEN IN BLACK, SHOULDN'T I? ALIENS WOULD BE COOL.

NO. I WANT TO ASK LIZARD DICK CHENEY SOME HARD-HITTING QUESTIONS AND THEN TRY NOT TO GET LAUGHED OUT OF THE *POST* EDITORIAL MEETINGS WHEN I GO TO REPORT THEM.

I DIDN'T THINK THEY LET PROOFREADERS INTO THOSE MEETINGS.

THAT WAS BEFORE I GOT TAPPED BY THE REPTILIAN ILLUMINATI TO RUN THE PAPER.

AND YOU'RE GOING TO OUT THEM, AFTER THEY GOT YOU A CUSHY JOB?

FAIR POINT.

I KNOW WHAT **YOU'D** ASK ABOUT.

YEAH.

THIS ISN'T A FUN ASIDE, IS IT? WHAT'S WRONG?

I'M SORRY. MY JOB. IT'S... DRAGGING THINGS UP.

STARFACE.

YEAH.

HE'S NOT REAL. THOSE FUCKERS AND THEIR PUPPETS JUST LED YOU--

I KNOW.

HE'S ABOUT AS REAL AS THE REPTILIANS.

YEAH.

CAN YOU TALK ABOUT WHAT'S BOTHERING YOU?

NO. I'M SORRY. I REALLY CAN'T.

OKAY, THEN. YOU KNOW I LOVE YOU?

YES.

IT'S OKAY, COLE. NONE OF THIS IS REAL.

COLE.

JESUS.

SORRY.

I REALLY THINK YOU'RE TRYING TO KILL ME.

SOMETIMES I FORGET TO TURN THE SNEAKY OFF.

YOU HERE TO MAKE SURE I DIDN'T GO RUNNING OFF TO THE PRESS OR SOMETHING?

OR SOMETHING.

IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT MATTY, I'VE NEVER SHARED ANYTHING I WAS WORKING ON WITH THE BUREAU, AND I'M NOT ABOUT TO START--

COLE. CALM DOWN. I'M NOT HERE FOR ANY OF THAT.

HOW ARE YOU?

EXCUSE ME?

LOOK, WE'RE GOING TO GO BACK IN THE DEPARTMENT OF TRUTH OFFICES, AND YOU'RE GOING TO NEED TO PRETEND THAT THE GROUND DIDN'T JUST DROP OUT FROM UNDER YOU...

I'M ASKING, AND I REALLY WANT TO KNOW. HOW ARE YOU?

I FEEL LIKE SOMEBODY RIPPED OUT ALL MY INSIDES AND PUT THEM BACK INSIDE ME.

PANCAKES?

WHAT?

DO YOU EAT **PANCAKES**?

OH, I MEAN... I GUESS?

LET'S GET YOU SOME PANCAKES.

THEY'RE GOOD.

I WOULDN'T TAKE YOU FOR SHITTY PANCAKES. I RESPECT MY TIME.

I SINCERELY THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO KILL ME THIS TIME.

DON'T PUSH IT, KID.

I BROUGHT YOU HERE BECAUSE YOU JUST GOT DROPPED IN THE DEEP END, AND I'M GIVING YOU A CHANCE TO ASK ME ALL THE SHIT YOU WANT TO ASK, BUT KNOW YOU PROBABLY CAN'T ON THE JOB.

HEH.

WHAT?

IT'S FUNNY. I'M SURE THAT'S WHAT EVERYONE ELSE WANTS WHEN YOU RECRUIT. THEY JUST SIGNED UP WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF TRUTH, AND NOW THEY WANT THE **REAL** ANSWERS.

BUT THERE AREN'T ANY. ISN'T THAT THE POINT?

YES. BUT PEOPLE ARE STUPID, SO THEY STILL HAVE QUESTIONS. AND I'M SURE YOU DO, TOO.

I SAW A LITERAL ICE WALL AT THE END OF THE WORLD, RUBY. I SAW PROOF THAT STANLEY KUBRICK FAKED THE MOON LANDING. I **KNOW** THE ANSWER TO EACH OF MY QUESTIONS.

COLLECTIVE BELIEF SHAPES THE WORLD, SO EVERYTHING IS A LITTLE BIT TRUE, OR HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BE TRUE.

ARE THERE ALIENS IN AREA 51? I'M SURE THERE ARE, OR THERE WERE, OR THERE **SOMETIMES** ARE DEPENDING ON WHICH MOVIES CAME OUT THAT YEAR.

MY HUSBAND WAS JOKING ABOUT REPTILIANS EARLIER.

I BET YOU'VE SEEN THEM WITH YOUR OWN EYES.

DAMN HARD TO KILL.

WAS THERE SOMEONE ON THE GRASSY KNOLL? THAT ONE IS HARDER.

IT IS, AND IT ISN'T.

BUT THAT'S NOT MY STORY TO TELL.

YOU THINK IT'S REALLY HIM? THAT THE DIRECTOR IS REALLY LEE HARVEY OSWALD? **THE** LEE HARVEY OSWALD?

THAT'S A GOOD WAY OF PHRASING IT. THE QUESTION IS WHICH OSWALD WAS HE? IS HE THE OSWALD WHO SHOT JFK? IS HE THE PATSY?

HE'S PROBABLY NOT THE ONE KILLED BY JACK RUBY.

ON THAT NOTE, I DON'T THINK I'M PAID TO BELIEVE IN COINCIDENCE ANYMORE. YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO TELL ME YOUR REAL NAME ONE OF THESE DAYS.

YOU'RE HANDLING ALL OF THIS WELL.

I DON'T HAVE TO DO A DAMN THING I DON'T WANT TO. I JUST BOUGHT YOU PANCAKES.

FAIR.

THE CORE CONCEIT OF IT ALL...THAT I CAN GRASP. THAT I UNDERSTAND.

IN THE ABSTRACT, IT MAKES PERFECT SENSE. THE PROBLEM IS WHERE IT GETS PERSONAL.

SATANIC PANIC.

It's just so strange to think, now.

There was a decade, a full decade, where the average person believed that the country was teeming with Satanic Cults, abusing and murdering children.

That there were secret messages in video games and music. And that your children's preschool teachers, they might be the enemy.

The McMartin Preschool Trial was the most famous. There were six years of criminal trials, six years of investigations, six years of interviewing children who didn't even know how to read.

The kids talked about being flushed down toilets and winding up in secret tunnels deep beneath the school. About seeing their teacher hovering in the air.

But there were no toilet entrances or secret tunnels or flying teachers. Just a bunch of scared children pushed into corroborating fictions by a frenzied public.

And that was <u>one school</u>. These cases happened all over the country.

But in a decade of cases, there was not one shred of evidence that Satanic Ritual Abuse ever occurred in this country.

Now, we know more.

We know that they were leading the witnesses. We know that kids were mimicking what they heard on the news, and what they heard in the questions they were being asked.

IT HAPPENED AT YOUR SCHOOL.

YES.

I remember the day my mom got a letter. She and my dad sat me down, and asked me if any of my teachers had ever done anything...uncouth.

And this was right when child abuse was just starting to get widespread attention. People were starting to believe what children told them.

But I don't have a memory of that. I don't even really remember saying those things. But there is something I do remember, and I can still see it viscerally, now.

I still remember the man with a pentagram scarred into his face eating a baby in front of me. Even though I know it never happened.

NOW YOU WANT TO KNOW IF YOUR STAR-FACED MAN WAS REAL. IF HE'S STILL OUT THERE.

I WOULDN'T SAY I WANT TO KNOW. WHEN I WAS FOUR YEARS OLD, A MAN IN MY HEAD TOLD ME THAT IF I TOLD ANYONE ABOUT HIM HE WOULD SEND THE DEVIL TO EAT ME.

AND THEN I TOLD THE WORLD ABOUT HIM.

And...Look...I still have the transcripts. I know everything I said. I don't know that we got much national attention, but it was all over the news in the upper Midwest.

My version of the toilets was a secret passage behind the bookcase where they kept the Play-Doh. And I talked about seeing my teachers eating other kids, and making us eat them.

When I had the dreams in the past, I knew I could go through the facts. I could assure myself that this never happened.

That it was a nightmare pried out of me by unscrupulous lawyers and psychologists.

BUT NOW...

I DON'T **WANT** TO KNOW, RUBY. I **NEED** TO KNOW.

OKAY, THEN.

IT'S TIME TO HIT **ROCK BOTTOM.**

DING

HOW MANY SUB-BASEMENTS ARE THERE IN THE BUILDING?

TWELVE I KNOW ABOUT.

BUT THIS IS THE DEEPEST I HAVE ACCESS TO.

ROCK BOTTOM.

YEAH.

IT SMELLS.

WE DON'T LET THEM OUT MUCH.

RUBY, IS THAT YOU?

HEY, HUNKY. I BROUGHT YOU PANCAKES.

CHOCOLATE CHIP?

OF COURSE.

THAT'S WHY I LOVE YOU. THEY SHOULD PUT YOU ON MONEY, AND WORSHIP YOU IN TEMPLES.

WHAT'S ON THE BOOB TUBE TONIGHT?

NOT ENOUGH BOOBS, IF I'M BEING HONEST. NOT THE GOOD KIND, ANYWAYS.

I PRAY TO XENU EACH NIGHT THAT CONSPIRACY THEORIES START GETTING SPREAD BY NAKED LADIES WITH BIG BUTTS AND COOL TATTOOS, AND NOT HORRIBLE SEXPESTS WITH SMALL PENISES AND UGLY FACES.

YOU'RE THE NEW KID.

YEAH. COLE TURNER.

WELCOME TO THE CIRCUS. I'M THE 800-POUND MAN THEY KEEP LOCKED IN A CAGE, WATCHING TELEVISION. PLEASE CALL THE AUTHORITIES. I WANT TO BE PUT IN A PROPER ZOO, WHERE I CAN SEE THE SUN.

THAT'S A JOKE, BY THE WAY. THE SUN IS MY ENEMY.

I HAVE TO JOKE OR ELSE I'LL START SCREAMING. I HAVE TO WATCH THESE IDIOTS DAY IN AND DAY OUT AND SEE WHAT DANGEROUS VOMIT COMES FLYING OUT OF THEIR MOUTHS.

THIS IS THE MAINLINE RIGHT INTO THE HEART. WHERE MOST PEOPLE GET THEIR NEWS. THESE ARE THE MONSTROSITIES FUCKING UP THE WHOLE GODDAMN WORLD.

ANYTHING NEW?

THE SHITWEASEL'S TALKING ABOUT THE JEWS AGAIN. NOTHING CREATIVE, BUT WE'LL NEED TO RE-KICK SOME OLD TIRES.

THE FESTERING TUMOR STARTED SHOUTING SOMETHING ABOUT MEXICAN PEOPLE HIDING IN THE TRUNKS OF YOUR CARS. I BET THAT ONE'S GONNA CATCH.

THE OOZING WALRUS HAS ANOTHER FALSE-FLAG THING. I'LL WRITE IT UP. YOU KNOW HOW THOSE CASES GO.

OOZING WALRUS...

I HAVE MY LITTLE PET NAMES FOR ALL MY FRIENDS, COLE. IT'S HOW THEY KNOW I LOVE THEM.

ANYTHING ON SATAN? SATANIC RITUAL ABUSE.

YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT THE '80S. I LOVE THE '80S. BUT NOT MY AREA.

YOU'RE GOING TO WANT DOCTOR TIN-FOIL.

IF EITHER OF YOU WERE IN THIS DEPARTMENT IN THE '70S, YOU WOULDN'T BE LAUGHING AT MY HAT.

AND IT'S **STILL** IN THE MEDIA. IT MIGHT BE A JOKE, BUT THERE'S STILL AN UNDERLYING BELIEF STRUCTURE.

IF YOU WANT THE ENEMY TO RIP ALL OF THESE FLIPPING SECRETS OUT OF YOUR HEAD, YOU CAN BE MY GUEST.

DOC. THE NEW KID WANTS TO KNOW ABOUT ANY CONSISTENT FIGURES IN SATANIC RITUAL ABUSE CASES. ONES THAT MIGHT HAVE STEPPED OUT OF THE FICTIONS.

OH, OH SURE. SATANIC PANIC. THAT HAS ITS OWN ROOM IN THE BACK.

THIS IS HOW YOU KEEP THE ARCHIVES?

YES, I DEVELOPED THE SYSTEM BACK IN THE LATE '60S WITH LEE. WILD TIMES. COLD WAR WAS IN PLAY, AND YOU NEVER KNEW WHEN A NEWSPAPER MIGHT HAVE SECRET MESSAGES.

AND YOU DIDN'T DIGITIZE...

DIGITAL MEDIA CHANGES TOO QUICK. IT'S SO REACTIVE. YOU NEVER KNOW WHICH CHANGES HIT WIKIPEDIA BECAUSE PEOPLE'S BELIEFS SHIFT, OR IF IT'S ALL JUST A NO-GOOD TEENAGER.

AND THOSE MACHINES ARE TRYING TO REPROGRAM YOUR MINDS. THEY'RE SUCCEEDING, TOO. I LET THE KID DEAL WITH ALL OF THAT.

THE KID?

UP ON YOUR LEFT...

SAY HI, FRANK.

SHE SEEMS NICE.

THAT **IS** HER BEING NICE. YOU SHOULD SEE HER WHEN SHE'S SOBER.

I'M GOING TO BE ASKING YOU FOR A DEBRIEF SOON, HELP UPDATE MY ROOMS ON FLAT EARTH AND THE MOON LANDING.

NEVER THOUGHT THE FLAT EARTHERS WOULD SUBSUME THE MOON TRUTHERS, BUT THIS IS A WILD WORLD, ISN'T IT?

I'M GOING TO NEED MORE STRING. MAYBE TAKE DOWN A WALL.

OKAY, HERE. SATANIC PANIC.

DARK STUFF. I HATE WHEN KIDS GET DRAGGED INTO ALL OF THIS. THEY'RE SO PLIABLE, THEY BELIEVE SO READILY. I MEAN HECK, IF THERE WERE ENOUGH KIDS IN THE WORLD, WE'D HAVE TO GO KILL SANTA CLAUS EVERY YEAR.

THANKFULLY, THAT'S ONLY HAD TO HAPPEN ONCE OR TWICE.

IT'S A CYCLICAL THING. IT HAPPENS IN TIMES OF PRIMAL CULTURAL FEAR. SOME CHRISTIANS BELIEVED THAT JEWS WERE EATING THEIR BABIES UP UNTIL THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY. THAT WAS THE PRIMARY MODE OF THIS THEORY FOR A LONG TIME.

MORE RECENTLY IT'S DEMOCRATS. PIZZAGATE AND THE LIKE. BUT THERE'S STILL A RESIDUAL SATANIC IMPRINT ON THE CONCEPT. RITUAL PEDOPHILIA AS AN AFFRONT TO A CHRISTIAN GOD.

YOU WERE ASKING ABOUT A SINGULAR FIGURE...AND THERE ISN'T ONE. I THINK ANTON LAVEY HELPED SHAPE THE MODERN IMAGE OF A SATANIST IN POPULAR CULTURE, AND THERE ARE LITTLE TAGS, BUT THE SYMBOLS ARE JUMBLED TOGETHER...

WITHOUT ANYONE EVER CONVICTED FOR RITUAL ABUSE...THERE WASN'T ANYONE THE PUBLIC COULD SINK THEIR CLAWS INTO. NO ONE SPECIFIC FOR OUR DEPARTMENT TO GO AND SHUT DOWN.

I'M SORRY, DOC...

WHAT YEAR IS THIS PICTURE FROM?

PLEASE DON'T REMOVE ANY PINS FROM THE WALLS, THIS IS AN INTRICATE SYSTEM, AND ANY INTERFERENCE...

WHAT YEAR?!

THIS IS FROM LAST YEAR. WHY?

IT'S OKAY, COLE. NONE OF THIS IS REAL.

COLE, IS THAT...?

YES.

DO YOU HAVE TRANSCRIPTS FROM THIS KID'S FILE? WERE THEY INTERVIEWED?

I...I CAN LOOK.

HE SAID... IT WAS OKAY... HE SAID IT WASN'T REAL.

BUT HE... BUT HE WAS EATING THE BABY.

IT'S OKAY, CARRIE...

HE...HE SAID THE DEVIL WAS THERE. THAT SHE WAS WATCHING ME...

AND THEN... AND THEN SHE STEPPED OUT OF THE SHADOWS.

SHE...SHE WAS WEARING A RED DRESS.

AND HER EYES...SHE DIDN'T HAVE REAL EYES.

BUT SHE COULD SEE ME.

AND SHE WAS SMILING.

NO...

SHIT... COLE.

IT'S OKAY, COLE. NONE OF THIS IS REAL.

DOC, GET LEE...HE'S HAVING A BREAK.

NO! I WANT TO WAKE UP!

DID YOU SEE? IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOU SEE

I WANT TO WAKE UP!!

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FATE

NEXT month

DEAD

RATED M / MATURE

ISSUE TWO

ZONE